

Expanding the Marketing Outlets of Local, Traditional, Vegetable and Fruit Crops in America Samoa

Location of Project: Tutuila, America Samoa (Western Region)

Purpose: The American Samoa Marketing Directory was created to facilitate direct contact between producers and commercial/institutional buyers in America Samoa, and provide clear information about commodity prices in the local marketplace, thus allowing producers to expand their marketing opportunities. The project consisted of three parts: a buyers' survey, a market price survey, and a producers' survey.

Accomplishments: ***Buyers' survey:*** Retailers, restaurant and hotel/motel managers provided input about the types of products they wished to purchase from farmers, identifying niche markets for specialty products such as red radishes, chayote, okra, rambutan, and durian. By conducting this survey, it was hoped that local farmers would have greater success in marketing their produce or making connections with potential customers.

Market price survey: Because produce at the local farmers market was sold in various units of measure – by the pile, the bag, the basket, or individually – the intent of the market price survey was to determine the average price per pound for the various agricultural commodities sold by local farmers. To accomplish this, five random selected samples of a given commodity were selected from each vendor, then weighed and calculated on a per pound basis.

Producers' survey: Market managers were surveyed, mostly through one-on-one interviews, about the types of products they purchased from local producers.

Lessons Learned: Collecting market price information from the farmers market proved to be the most problematic aspect of the project. On Saturdays, most farmers wanted to sell their produce as quickly as possible, and they felt that the survey methods interfered with their sales. Because of resistance from vendors at the farmers market, the day used to collect price information from vendors was changed to a weekday, which caused researchers to miss a lot of reliable information about many of the commodities since they were only marketed on Saturday, the most important market day.

Conclusion:

The farmers and consumers that were surveyed felt that the concept of the survey was a good idea and a positive effort, and it marked a step in the right direction in terms of addressing current marketing problems. Both producers and buyers found it useful to receive information about local supply and demand conditions.